



Hello everyone,

I am continuing, this month, with inviting those who are really responsible for the success of The Debenham Project – the volunteers and professionals who lead and look after the activities and groups that can make such a difference – to tell us a little about what they do. This time it is about the Carers Club and Info Café.

Early on in the Project, it was clear that, as a carer for someone with dementia, or a person with the illness, being able to get together with those who are also living with the impact of the illness on their lives can help enormously in reducing feelings of isolation and helplessness, and sharing experiences with others who truly understand what they are going through can offer commonsense advice, information and tips for coping. However, if it can also provide a warm and friendly social atmosphere it becomes something special in the diary, somewhere to feel at home where there are no labels to say “this person might behave strangely” or “that person could be struggling to manage”. This is the philosophy of The Carers Club and Info Café that meet twice a month in Dove Cottage “powered” by Sue, Margaret, Carole, Tony, Jan, Steve, Jean and several other volunteers but primarily “lubricated” by chocolate cake – In fact probably the finest selection of luscious cakes in Suffolk – We couldn’t manage this without our wonderful bakers. An afternoon tea when you can get to know others in a similar position to yourself and make friends. It’s an opportunity to talk through problems with volunteers who understand your situation or just to enjoy an hour or so in company. It is amazing how friendships have been made and even friendships rediscovered after 20, 30, or even more years. An experienced volunteer dementia support advisor is there to help each month. And like the NHS it is all at no cost to those who participate – Sue even insists that everyone takes home a generous piece of cake for the next day. Why? Firstly, because carers often have no time to bake nice cakes, secondly because although someone who has dementia may not remember what they did the previous day they will know that they had a really nice time and the cake they take home will often remind them of it, and finally because this is what caring is all about. Thank you Sue, and all the team.

Next, I would like to draw your attention to the new county-wide “Dementia Together” service which was launched at the beginning of April. The Debenham Project is an integral part of this scheme not only providing the frontline information and support in our area but also being able to directly refer those who need more help to the professional services via a central hub led by Sue Ryder. The aim is to ensure simple, direct and continuing access to support whenever it is needed. **If you are just curious, you are becoming concerned, you are seeking a diagnosis, or you are looking for support, I encourage you to contact us on 01728 862003 and register with the service. Or you can ring the Suffolk Dementia Together Helpline on 08081 688000.**

To finish this month, I especially want to personally thank everyone who have supported the project with their donations.

With best wishes, Lynden

Tel. 01728 862003

www.the-debenham-project.org.uk